

Bent's Old Fort

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Bent's Old Fort
National Historic Site
La Junta, Colorado



Santa Fe Trail Encampment

June 4, 2016 8:00 – 5:30 pm

Location: Bent's Old Fort

The sights, sounds and smells of the 1830s and 1840s Santa Fe Trail and Bent's Fort comes to life during the largest event of the year, the Santa Fe Trail Encampment! More than 50 living historians perform the work of hunters, traders, teamsters, Indians, laborers, craftsmen, and soldiers in the fort and at their camps in the cottonwoods on the river. While traders conduct trade with the Indians, the hunters in camp will be busy skinning and packing hides for shipment by horseback. The sound of a handsaw will be heard coming from the wagon alley as carpenters repair wheels for a Red River cart. Meat and beans will be the main "bill of fare" for company employees unless the women decide to bake a vinegar pie or make trappers' fruit. The fort doctor may be able to help you with your ailments. Just remember the main forms of treatment in the 1840s is bleeding, purging and puking!



A short walk to the river will take you by a trader tent where an "Opposition" trader may try to lure you away from trading at Bent's Fort. He will have his traveling trade goods available for inspection. Further along you will come to a small Indian camp. Don't be afraid. The tribe is here trading at the fort and will welcome you in. Just inside the cottonwoods you will see a various kinds of tents grouped together in military fashion. This is the Topographical Engineer camp, just as it was in 1846. The trapper camp is the furthest camp away set on the river. You may smell buffalo tongue on the fire and hides being prepared for drying. Everyone there is ready to help you step back in time.

Hike with the Caravan Down the Santa Fe Trail

June 5, 2016 10am – 1:00 pm

Location: 15 miles Southwest of La Junta, Colorado



On Sunday, June 5, the public is invited to walk along with the wagon caravan made up of the fort's Conestoga and Dearborn wagons, and period riders down a 3-mile segment of the original Santa Fe Trail. The caravan will depart from Sierra Vista Overlook, 14 miles south of La Junta, Colorado, just off of U.S. Highway 350 on State Highway 71. The caravan will leave at 10 am and should reach Timpas Picnic Area before 1 pm.

The National Park Service in cooperation with US Forest Service - Comanche National Grassland will provide shuttle service from Sierra Vista to Timpas before the walk and from Timpas to Sierra Vista after the walk. Plan to wear sturdy boots or shoes, a hat, and bring sunscreen, water, and your lunch. The wagons will not be used to transport visitors and so be prepared to walk the 3 miles. The Junior Ranger program will be available for kids to earn a Junior Ranger badge in recognition of their accomplishment. This is a great opportunity to get a taste of what it was like to traverse the plains in the 1840s. Call 719-383-5023 for further information.

